

September 23rd, 2013

Honorable Jed S. Rakoff
500 Pearl St.
New York, NY
10007

Your Honor,

My name is Dianna Prato, and I am the fiance of Bob Nguyen. I am aware of that he is charged with conspiracy and wire fraud. I write this letter as a character reference on his behalf.

Bobby and I met in college and have been together 14 years. We attended the University of California at Davis and knew each other as part of a Catholic youth group called the Newman Center. Though Bobby had a certain shyness about him, his genuine kindness was always his charm. In college, he worked a campus job twenty hours a week to help pay his way through school (his parents had little means to contribute), yet he always found time to help those who had less than him. As a student volunteer at the Newman Center, he helped organize local charities such as food drives, visitations to the elderly, and international volunteer projects - but Bobby was noticeably one of the few students who would give more than just his time. He would also donate a little bit of money, when he could, to charity. He was just as broke as any other college student, yet that kind of selflessness and generosity became his reputation.

At this time, if you were to have asked Bobby what his major was, he would have probably said "I have a red bike". It was a running joke. Bobby took an extraordinarily long time to decide his major and usually found ways of averting that question. But he had a knack for math and technology was a rapidly developing field at the time, so he ultimately traded in his red bike for a degree in electrical engineering. That's how we ended up in the Silicon Valley.

As a young twenty something out of college, he immersed himself in the usual things that made him happy: hiking in the sierras, ultimate frisbee games, a close circle of friends, and he continued his community service as a children's tutor at a residential homeless shelter. Although he was a decently good engineer, if you were to have asked him, "what do you want to do when you grow up", his answer might still have been, "I have a red bike". I believe Bobby often longed to work in a setting more intimately connected to his community service activities as he has always found his truest motivation when caring for others.

Once in a casual Saturday afternoon conversation with some of our closest friends, we were chatting about dreams and hopes and proverbial questions about what we really wanted to do with our lives. I am typically the more talkative between the two of us while Bobby usually hesitates to reveal his most personal thoughts. But this day was an exception. "I'd like to teach math to children in developing nations", was what he shared. I knew it was an honest answer when I heard it. As long as I had known him, every so often, he would mention living and teaching in another country, and that type of service seemed a good fit for his personality. But I believe he never acted upon the inclination for a couple of

reasons. Practically speaking, it was more of a volunteer position, not employment - and the other reason would be me.

We had been together since January of 2000, and we got engaged on Christmas eve of 2004. At that time I had just finished up a secondary education teaching credential program, and I was also taking night classes towards a graduate degree. I was set to work as a chemistry teacher at a local high school (a school that I absolutely adored), and we had bought a little apartment together. It felt like so much of life was just beginning, and we both had this sense of youthful optimism about us. Just as it seemed that good things were falling into place, life would have it that I developed an immune disorder.

My illness is better described in terms of symptoms than causes, but as a result of this condition, I became tremendously weak, and my ability to control infections, severely impaired. I have been seen by specialists at several medical universities across the country, but no one could pinpoint the exact causes of this. Doctors only left me with more questions than answers along with very poor symptom management strategies. After an agonizing string of tests and appointments and experimental therapies, my condition had considerably worsened. It was just six months before our wedding when I went from being sick but functional, to being entirely bedridden. I had to drop my graduate classes mid-semester; my body weight was drastically declining; and the swelling in my upper respiratory area was so severe, it was painful to speak. Even small utterances were reflexively cut short, and I would use pen and paper to communicate the most basic of sentences. Wedding plans at that time were obviously not possible, and we had to postpone the event.

Since then, I have oscillated through times of marginal improvement, and many times when I am devastatingly ill. A "good day" is merely a relative term, and even my best of days would not compare to any normal measures of health. On such days, I might be able to get to the grocery store or prepare my own food, or otherwise take care of some very basic needs. On the worst of days, it is complete stillness. A few years ago, I had a prolonged exacerbation that was far worse than anything I had experienced before it. My arms and legs drastically - and quite suddenly - lost all of their strength. If I walked down the hallway from the bedroom, I would collapse in the bathroom. I began needing a wheel chair to move even small distances. The respiratory swelling returned, and I was again using pen and paper (or a computer screen) to communicate. I was sitting up was less than 60 minutes each day, and this continued on for eight months without remission. At the time, I was 29 years old.

During this episode, I stayed at my parents house so that I could have the complete assistance that I needed throughout day, and Bobby made the four hour round trip every weekend to see me. He also started working from home as much as possible. If he could work from home on Thursday and Friday, then he would stay with me from Wednesday evening until Sunday evening. In this terrible time, the college boy who would give more than he had, the young man who was committed to helping children in need, and the quiet soul who often thought of devoting his life to causes greater than himself, carried me through my suffering. If I was too weak to stand, he held me on my feet. If I was too sick to leave my room, he gave me the emotional support I needed to get through the day. He was more concerned with my well being than the trajectory of his own life, and I became the object of his generosity even though I had nothing exceptional to deserve it.

I tell this story because I believe it conveys the character that defines him. His compassionate acts are a rare example of human kindness, and his selfless generosity, inimitable. I have seen his enduring capacity for goodness, and I have seen him strive to make positive contributions to the world. I know that he intends to continue on that path as he rebuilds a life for himself.

He has personally expressed to me the shame he has felt over his transgressions, and I know that these will never happen again. The ramifications have been devastating: the public humiliation, the disgrace amongst peers and colleagues; the lower stature of employment, and the tremendous financial losses are lasting consequences. He is the only one between the two of us who works, and that will not change in the foreseeable future. It gives us both tremendous anxiety to know that his employment prospects and our security are severely damaged. I worry every day about our financial future, a future that I unfortunately have no working capacity to influence.

I hope this letter provided insight into Bobby's life and personal character. He is a wonderful human being, and if you have any further questions, please contact me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dianna Prato". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.

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